

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TW, CH

SUBJECT: MICHAEL KAU ON TAIWAN'S FUTURE

REF: HONG KONG 9271

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CONFERENCE PROPOSAL RESEMBLES IDEAS OF KAU'S WHICH HE TRIED OUT ON EMBOFFS IN LATE JULY, BUT DOES NOT RESEMBLE ANY THINKING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS MENTIONED REFTEL WHICH HAS REACHED US. THOUGH MOST SENIOR OFFICIALS IN FACT DO CONSIDER US RECOGNITION OF PRC INEVITABLE, THEY EXPECT US TO BEHAVE IN WAYS WHICH WILL MAKE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF ROC POSSIBLE. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, NO SENIOR OFFICIAL RECOMMENDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRC AND OPPOSITION TO SUCH NEGOTIATIONS IS FIRREST OF PREMIER CHAING'S POLICY COMMITMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. MICHAEL KAU CALLED ON POLCOUNS AND DCM JULY 29, HAVING BEEN PRECEDED BY LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM FSO DAVID DEAN. KAU, WHO IS MEMBER OF PROMINENT TAIWANESE GENTRY FAMILY IN TAINAN (HIS COUSIN, KAU YU-JEN, IS MAGISTRATE OF TAINAN), EXPLAINED HE HAD RETURNED AFTER EIGHTEEN YEARS TO GATHER SOURCE MATERIALS FOR BOOK ON TAIWAN'S HISTORY AND FUTURE. HE ALSO MENTIONED HE WAS ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULT IN GATHERING DATA AND MATERIALS AT INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ELSEWHERE BECAUSE OF SUSPICION WITH WHICH GOVT VIEWED HIM.

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EM CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS WAS RATHER FREE-WHEELING DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR TAIWAN WITH KAU PRO-POUNDING VARIOUS HYPOTHESES AND EMBOFFS COMMENTING. ONE SUCH SCENARIO RESEMBLED THE FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE PROPOSAL WHICH, IN REFTEL, HE ATTRIBUTED TO SENIOR GROG OFFICIALS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THIS CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE JULY 29 -- ELEVEN DAYS BEFORE PRESIDENT FORD TOOK OFFICE AND, ACCORDING TO KAU, "JOLTED GRC OFFICIALS."

4. FOLLOWING JULY 29 MEETING, KAU WENT SOUTH TO TAINAN TO VISIT FAMILY. HE WAS TO RETURN TO TAIPEI AUG 7 AND TO DINE WITH POLCOUNS AUG 8. ON AUG 8, KAU TELEPHONED TO SAY HE COULD NOT MAKE DINNER AND BECAUSE OF PRESSING BUSINESS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MEET BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR HONG KONG AUG 10. AUG 10 IS ONE DAY AFTER PRES. FORD TOOK OFFICE AND ONE DAY BEFORE PHOTOS OF PRESIDENT WITH HUANG CHEN RAN IN PRESS. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO CHECK WHETHER KAU IN FACT DID DEPART TAIWAN AUG 10.

5. WHILE SOME OF THE LEAST SOPHISTICATED OBSERVERS HERE HAD HOPED NORMALIZATION PROCESS WOULD CEASE WITH PRES. NIXON'S DEPARTURE, SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS DID NOT AND DO NOT EXPECT A REVERSAL. INDEED, KAU IS CORRECT IN SAYING THAT SENIOR GROG OFFICIALS CONSIDER US RECOGNITION OF PRC TO BE INEVITABLE. BUT WHILE WE HAVE HEARD CONFERENCE IDEA FROM KAU, AND MANY ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR KPROPOSALS FOR SOME INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEE OF TAIWAN'S SEPARATE STATUS FROM OTHER TAIWANESE INTELLECTUALS (INCLUDING KAU'S COUSIN, THE MAGISTRATE OF TAINAN HSIEN), WE HAVE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING REMOTELY SIMILAR FROM A SENIOR GROG OFFICIAL. ADDING TO THIS KAU'S OWN REMARK THAT HE WAS UNDER SOME GOVT SUSPICION, WE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT KAU'S ACCOUNT RINGS VERY FALSE INDEED.

6. CONCERN FOR FUTURE OF ROC AND TAIWAN IS UPPERMOST IN MINDS OF SENIOR GROG OFFICIALS AS IT IS FOR ALL OF THE ELITES ON THIS ISLAND. MOST PIN THEIR HOPES ON THE US BEHAVING IN WAYS WHICH WILL MAKE CONTINUED ROC EXISTENCE POSSIBLE. NO SENIOR OFFICIAL, AS FAR AS WE CAN

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TELL, RECOMMENDS NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRC AND OPPOSITION TO SUCH NEGOTIATIONS IS FIRMEST OF PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO'S POLICY COMMITMENTS.
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